622 [191 177] Most direct

commands, in so far as I was able to observe, were made in Spanish![4] — essentially in acculturation contexts. In general, they concerned village care, small services, and the like. No occasion was observed of commanding older men, except for a married youth of 19, who was the youngest adult male in the village. The two or three commands he received during my stay went unnoticed, and, in one or two instances, were even directly contravened. The capitans of the Cinaruco river group and of Palmarito de Guachara both consistently complained that no one paid enough attention to them, and the Palmarito chief complained that he never was kept [571] sufficiently informed of events by his people. The fact is that people do pretty much as they choose in all important decision-making situations which do not involve the community at large, or the relationship of some member of the community or the entire group to outsiders.[5] In the former situation, the chief serves as a consultative funnel through which the community discussion pours back and forth until the community achieves some clear but unstated consensus upon which 622 community members can act, individually of course. Only in the situations dealing ●648 with outside groups does the Yaruro capitanship emerge as a more developed [334] status which might metaphorically be described as a position similar to that of a minister of foreign relations. In behalf of his group, he talks with any representatives of outside groups, especially if they are non-Yaruro, and acts as gatherer of information and as channel of communication between the community and the outside entity. Even this is weakened, however, since it applies more by courtesy than by fact among the Yaruro themselves, and other members of the community may perform the same function even if to a somewhat smaller degree. It is also weakened in that no Yaruro is prevented from acting on his own with respect to non-Yaruro outsiders, and, in fact, many Yaruro do establish their own relationships with outsiders as a number of instances attested. Indeed, the rights of the individual members of the society to make their own decisions, at least internally if not also [682] externally, is insisted on. In one instance, a chief who took it upon himself to

[4] Commands and other stress situations, which generally appear to be uncongenial to the Yaruro and more overt as the people have been more subject to acculturation, seem to elicit from the Yaruro Spanish responses rather than Yaruro ones. It is as though it [578] were not fitting to utter commands or express anger in Yaruro. Thus, the few times [152] noisy altercation was heard among the Cinaruco Yaruro, the language used was Spanish. [191] The chief's commands and his overt anger were always expressed in Spanish, even if he had just before been speaking in Yaruro. Though anger may often be felt, it is not shown if the participants are expressing themselves in Yaruro. Thus, the chief scolded one of the village boys for riding one of the recently acquired burros — in Spanish; he ordered a 19-year old young man to do some task — in Spanish; he complained of the actions of one of the village elders in taking on the job of guide without first consulting him (though he would certainly have permitted it) — in Spanish.

[181 114] [5] Cf. Leeds, 1960 a, with respect to the place of individual action in Yaruro society. Though there is individual action, choice, and responsibility, these are all carried out as an aspect of community organization and essentially with community affirmation. A person is not an individual set in counterpoint to his society — there is no polarity of individual-society, as we, in our culture, generally seem to conceive. Individualism in the latter sense does not exist among the Yaruro. The Yaruro should not be mistaken for an individualistic culture, as, I suspect, several of the cultures described as individualistic in Mead, 1937, should not have been.

represent his people to the outside world without consultation and to make arbitrary decisions for them inside the community — mainly in his own interest — was, with the consent of the community, assassinated by one of the members, now in excellent standing in that community as a respected shaman. The chief in question had stepped beyond the bounds designated for his status. In sum, the position of chief, even though formally recognized by Yaruro society and reinforced by formal recognition and appointment by Venezuelan authorities, is feeble as an institution and as a status.[6] It is our hypothesis that ecological conditions of Yaruro life determine the form of the chieftainship in such a way that its stronger institutionalization would be impossible, and we turn to this question now.

III

Yaruro subsistence activities[7] comprise swiddening, gathering, pig herding, hunting and fishing, mentioned in the order of their importance as contributors to the total food supply as measured in calories.[8] Horticulture probably provides 60—70% of the total annual food supply. The horticulture practiced is characteristic of tropical forest slash-and-burn gardens, with a slow rotation of plots in order to permit soil renewal and weed control. Trees are cut, at present with steel axes and formerly, apparently, with axes of bone or shell, and then burnt. Occasional fences are roughly made of the logs to keep out pigs. Bitter manioc (*Manihot utilissima*),[9] in several varieties, is the main crop, though sweet manioc (*Manihot aipi*), also in several varieties, is planted too, as are corn, bananas, sugar cane — each in several varieties — and a number of lesser crops such as melons, squashes, pumpkins, pineapples, sweet potatoes, and yautia or ocumo (*Xanthosoma sagittifolium*). Crops are planted with a digging stick which may also be used in harvesting. Gardens are weeded, once only, early in the growth of the crops. Other than clearing, the only soil preparation is the construction of hills for planting bananas. This is done by burning hills made by a certain species of ants (*huachaquero*). The hills, which are quite wide and low, are filled with organic matter enriching the soil.[10] Harvesting is aided with baskets for carrying the crops. Baskets contain about half a bushel or less. No fertilization, no terracing, no drainage, no irrigation, no extensive turning of the soil is done.

The gathered resources include a number of roots, particularly changuango, changuanito, and guapo (*Maranta arundinacea*);[11] varied fruits, especially that of

[6] Professor Benjamin N. Nelson informs me that in medieval Spain, village communities had an official, also called *capitan*, whose function was to treat with state functionaries representing the world beyond the village community's frontier. It is possible that the Yaruro capitan, and many others in Venezuela, are an acculturative transfer of this office to tribal groups. In the case of the Yaruro, this would have happened some 250—300 years ago.

[7] The use, here, of the terms 'activity', 'tasks', 'techniques', 'tools', 'resources', and 'habitat' corresponds to the definitions given in Leeds, 1960 b.

[8] Cf. Leeds, 1961, which gives this data in detail and describes the habitat and horticulture *in extenso*.

[9] Native terms for these crops are given *ibid.*

[10] *Ibid.*, note 9, contains data on soil values.

[11] Identifications are from Pittier, 1926.

/111 cont./

G 101 114 Raymond Fiasson (1) in 1947 reported the existence of

1. Raymond Fiasson, "Algunos aspectos cientificos del Apure /Some Scientific Aspects of the Apure/," in El Agricultor Venezolano, Year XII, No. 127, No. 1947, p. 11.

Guliguli Indians on the banks of the Juriepe, a southern tributary of the Cinaruco. According to our Yaruro informants, these did not exist. Guliguli perhaps is only a synonym for Guahibo-Chiricoa.

The Amburua.

G 101 The Amburua appear to live on the other side of the Meta, on the Rio Negro in Colombia. Not direct neighbors of the Yaruro, they have only rare contacts with the latter. The Y G 648 Yaruro of village 30 on the Riecito recounted to us a fight against the Amburua which took place not far from them, in the course of which their adversaries were decimated.

2. The Habitat (Capanaparo and Riecito Rivers) (see Map 2 and Tables I and II)

Y 361 621 The Yaruro population is divided on an economic basis into small communities, established near a water course and composed of several families grouped under the authority of one head.

Y 361 Along the Capanaparo and Riecito explored by us, there are some 30 irregularly spaced on the 400 kilometers of river (2).

2. We shall dwell in detail on the structure of the communities in other articles, as we have on habitation types further on here. [see, pp. 19-20. -Analyst]

/116 cont./

342 The third type (III) is a shelter of the same height as the preceding hut; sometimes it is only one of the type II huts covered over with some palms; it is composed of leafy branches designed for protection against the sun's rays, and it stands on low sandy shores which are no longer covered by water.

342 361 The first type (I) and the second built on a sand dune or a shore out of reach of floods (II 1 a or b) are those which the Yaruro use in the rainy season, when the rivers overflow their beds and flood the savanna.

As soon as the water level begins to drop, these winter quarters are abandoned for the huts of the second type, but built on low shores (II 2 a or b), the roof of which protects them from the rain that still persists. At the height of the dry season, when the latter ceases to fall and only protection against the sun is necessary, they use the third type (III) which they install, approaching nearer to the water, on the sand which the dropping level of the river has newly freed.

With the return of the first rains they follow this same process in reverse, but skipping the transitional type, that is, directly reinstating their winter habitations.

● [648] The most widespread winter habitation is type I. In winter, type II is only found in exceptional cases; it is present in nine communities (of which three also have type I) out of 30 when type I is temporarily nonexistent or unusable: destroyed and not reconstructed (its construction /117/ requiring time and manual labor and the adult men often being absorbed in the quest for daily food) or placed under an interdict by the Venezuelan peasants, as in the case of the communities of the lower Capanaparo where the Yaruro, accused of having stolen livestock, were driven from their winter habitations on the banks and forced to install themselves outside the domain of the Llaneros, i.e., on the sand dunes which border the river.

Concerning type II built during the transition period, it may sometimes be kept throughout the entire dry season (communities 2, 5, 7, 15, 16, 26, 29 and 30). As for type I, it

/9 cont./

114 productive and the Yaruro are living mainly on sandy shores,
121 leading the life of fishers and nomadic gatherers--and limited
241 them to the lower Capanaparo. There these Indians do not
work the land, or at least very little; apparently for reasons
linked with the proximity of Venezuelan peasants, such as:
interdiction on the part of the latter who, with or without title,
are masters of the land, the risk of being overrun by the free-
roaming livestock, or simply work as peons on the farms, which
would hardly allow them time to cultivate the land.

241 In fact, agriculture is only practiced on certain portions of their territory and particularly on those where they do not have contact with the Venezuelan peasants. This statement excludes at first sight the recent acquisition of it from the latter. Such a deduction is moreover corroborated by the accounts of the Jesuits (7) who lived for a while in the region in the eigh-

7. See "infra" IV List...2.

teenth century and who already described them as agriculturists--without specifying whether they had been before their arrival--and by the present Yaruro themselves, who affirm that they all formerly had conucos (8). But these points still do not

8. Kitchen gardens, in Venezuelan.

allow us to assert that they were in possession of the technique in the pre-Hispanic period.

172 2) The region, on the other hand, is rich in archaeological sites containing objects (pottery remains, figurines of baked clay and lignite, polished stone axes, funeral urns) which are of a completely different make from those made by the present-day Yaruro, who, moreover, do not recognize them as being of their making. Is it a question of remains of objects of forerunners or remains of objects of the Otomaco, who at the time of the Jesuits apparently lived in the present-day territory

/9 cont./
of the Yaruro (7), or even remains of objects of the Yaruro of

7. See "infra" IV List...2.

former times, whose descendants have forgotten the techniques of making them?

c) History

We hardly know much more about their post-Colombian history. Some Jesuit missionaries, as we mentioned above, had contacts with them on the bank of the Orinoco toward the middle of the eighteenth century (7).

7. See "infra" IV List...2.

Did they leave some sort of imprint on their culture? This we do not know. In any case the Yaruro do not seem to have preserved any memory of it, if it isn't the fear of bearded men on the part of the children. They do remember /10/ on the other hand for a more recent period some battles which put in opposition in the course of a civil war on the Capanaparo even the Venezuelans against each other.

The important event of the last years (1920-1940) remains for them the installation of Racionales (9) on the Capanaparo,

9. Venezuelans

an installation the repercussions of which, as much on their way of life and the social, economic, and religious structure of their society as on their sanitary conditions and their demographic situation (illnesses and, at a certain period, repression), have been and continue to be considerable.

/12 cont./
budare (24), of tinaja (25), etc...which are found there are

24. Dish to cook flat manioc cakes, in Venezuelan.

25. Jar in Venezuelan.

from the Otomaco women. But they often came this way--sometimes to dance or to buy canoes--to meet with the ancestors of the Yaruro of today. Like the former they were themselves good people. Yaruro and Otomaco each spoke in their dialect, which they mutually understood, which was not difficult. "Today," he added, "not a person remembers it."

Their relations must even have extended further, since they married among themselves without any obstacle /13/ placing itself in the way. Ijiai in fact approved of these unions, as opposed to those with other Indians, the Piquero and Taparito included, Pedro Ramón Camacho specified, or with the Racionales, of which he disapproved.

They fed themselves, it appears, not only on fish, tortoise, deer, and vegetable produce grown in the conucos, but also on guiriguiri duck (26), a bird little in demand among the

26. Venezuelan name of the Dendrocygna automnalis.

present Indians because of the fishy taste of its meat. In addition, like the Yaruro, they appear to have lived in round huts built on the dunes, practiced a ball game, and made their pottery with the same technique and not with the aid of basketwork molds, contrary to what the remains with basketwork impressions which abound in the region where they apparently lived would lead us to suppose.

7: Leeds E-4, 5 (1958) 1964 SS19 Yaruro SS19

B) Petrullo restricted his visits to the sand banks along and in the river, and, after his first arrival, most of his travelling was done on the streams. Gardens are never to be found on the sand banks and bars, but rather, usually, on the affluent creeks which are just above flood level of the rivers in the rainy season. Therefore he was not in a position to see the gardens which Le Besnerais later saw in the same area when he explored back from the river.

C) Petrullo was in the llanos in the dry season when the Yaruro move nearer the rivers both to secure a water supply as the water table lowers and to avail themselves of the much more plentiful and accessible river fauna[11] at a time when vegetable harvests are reduced because of drought. He was therefore observing dry-season subsistence — and perhaps only a part of it.

D) The probability that he observed only a part of the dry-season subsistence pattern in his area is reinforced by two considerations:

1) He reports the fact that 150 Yaruro had been massacred by Venezuelans a month before his arrival (p. 181). Their response under such circumstances is, as fast as possible, to get off the land that the Venezuelans want and to move to the rivers. I myself had occasion to observe such a diaspora, occurring in response to a smaller massacre. In view of this sort of response, it is likely, therefore, that Petrullo's group was living off river resources and away from their gardens at the time of his visit.

2) Maps indicate that in the lower part of the Capanaparo River, the flooding is greater and the number and size of side creeks suitable for horticulture is smaller than upstream on any of the large rivers. In other words, the available area for garden plots is much smaller, and riverine subsistence proportionately more important. Upriver, and more especially on the Sinaruco and on the middle and upper Cunaviche and Arauca rivers, there is much more tillable ground.

"I thought you said you could not sing and were not a musico?" "Yes, that was true last week when I had the grippe, but now my grippe is better I can be a musico again." And many similar examples of the extreme caution one needed to exercise regarding negative responses in order to be sure they were not merely descriptive of the place and moment. If Petrullo asked "Do you raise crops?", his informants would most likely have said, "No, we have no crops here", under the circumstances in which he found them.

[11] The river fauna is more plentiful and accessible in dry season because, first, it is more concentrated, and, second, it is more visible. During the wet, flooding season, fish, and other animals spread even into smaller streams and out upon the watery llanos — we caught a small piranha on the grassy, watercovered plain itself. On the plains, the fish are lost among the grasses and are virtually impossible to spear or shoot with bow and arrow. The river turbulence of the rainy season, meanwhile, has brought so much mud from further upstream that many of the rivers are opaque, especially in those parts of the llanos constructed of mud rather than sandy soils. Fish and the water reptiles and mammals are well-cloaked by the murky stream. The waters and the plains clear in the dry season so that the fish are concentrated in the limpid, grassless waters of the rivers, while land animals and riparian fauna are all crowded together near the banks in their search for food and water.